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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a plan of action for managing evaluation implementation and ensuring the ongoing utilization of evaluation results. It addresses strategies that are required to manage the problems encountered in a 10-step management plan. Focus is on introducing an evaluation monitoring system within organizations. Steps in the plan include: (1) pre-evaluation assessment; (2) implementation of human resources strategies; (3) establishment of key result areas, indicators, and performance measures, standards and targets, and other criteria for judging the program; determination of priorities for collecting research; and setting of boundaries on what the evaluation will produce; (4) development of a database management system; (5) determination of responsibility for evaluation and data collection and manipulation; (6) establishment of the reporting and feedback requirements; (7) determination of rewards for performance; (8) initiation of evaluation procedures; (9) determination of the worth of the evaluation; and (10) maintenance of impetus via continued endorsement from management and widespread reporting of achievements. Rationale for such a plan of action, organizational structures that support evaluation, and designation of responsible persons are also discussed. (TJH)

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EVALUATION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT.

Dr. Anona F. Armstrong

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ABSTRACT

Many organizations expect that evaluation techniques will assist them to know what is happening in the operation of their organization, and as a result act as a watchdog to monitor the new found autonomy of managers, cut costs, and provide a guide to the planning and delivery of more efficient and effective services. Although evaluation offers the opportunities to achieve the above, these successful outcomes depend upon careful and expert evaluation planning and management.

This paper presents a plan of action for managing evaluation implementation and ensuring the ongoing utilization of evaluation results. It addresses the strategies required to manage the problems encountered prior to and during the implementation process in a ten step management plan.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Many organizations expect that evaluation techniques will assist them to know what is happening in the operation of their organization and as a result, act as a watchdog to monitor the new found autonomy of managers, cut costs and provide a guide to the planning and delivery of more efficient and effective services.

Although evaluation offers the opportunity to achieve the above, these successful outcomes depend upon careful and expert evaluation planning and management.

This paper presents a plan of action for managing evaluation implementation and ensuring the ongoing utilization of evaluation results. It considers why we need a plan of action, what organization structures support the introduction of evaluation, some alternative forms for evaluation responsibility, and ten steps in an evaluation management plan.

2.0 WHY DO WE NEED A PLAN OF ACTION FOR MANAGING EVALUATION?

There are at least three reasons for planning an evaluation:

1. A plan establishes the:

   - tasks to be accomplished
   - responsibility for their accomplishment
   - timeframe
   - budget

Without a plan our evaluation approach will be haphazard, lack co-ordination and fail to gain commitment from managers and staff. The absence of guidelines can generate unrealistic expectations in users which may be unmet because they are either too high or too low.

2. A plan is a target against which to judge the success of the system.

   In contrast to uncertainty:

   - realistic expectations can be motivating

   - a plan anticipates and takes the steam out of problems before they start

3. The third purpose of a plan is to provide a framework:

   - to build evaluation into organizational structures and operational procedures

   - to make evaluation a management tool in which evaluation and monitoring are integrated into a continuous process of policy formations, goal setting, planning, budgeting, service delivery and evaluation.

3.0 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT EVALUATION

Evaluation is a management tool. Like any management practice, it will not survive unless supported by adequate organization structures.

They include:

1. An appropriate organization culture, i.e. one in which values, roles and rules endorse excellence of performance, performance measurement and rewards commensurate with performance.

2. Open communication systems. In Kanter's (1985) terms they should be integrative rather than segmented.

3. Provision of rewarding experiences for good performance.

4. Management systems, including:

   * Stated goals, objectives

   * Data base management systems with standardized data collection, coding, storage, analysis, and presentation

   * Shared evaluation philosophy and practices:

     - common understanding of what is meant by evaluation, and

     - agreement on the purpose of the evaluation

     - agreement on where evaluation fits into the planning process

4.0 WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR EVALUATION?

Although evaluation is a multifaceted activity its successful introduction into any organization will depend upon some person or group having responsibility for its implementation.

Some options for this entity are:

* Program Managers
* Internal/External Consultants
* Co-ordinators
* All of these

Who should be the responsible body on any particular occasion depends upon the purpose of the evaluation. Each of the above have different roles and each serve different evaluation purposes.

Some of the tasks undertaken by these are presented below:

Program Manager
- Sets goals, objectives
- Does formative evaluation and monitoring
- Acts to impact on operations

Internal Consultant
- Designs data systems
- Selects monitoring data
- Codes, analyses, presents the data in an appropriate form
- Provides knowledgeable feedback

Co-ordinator or Steering Committee	- Co-ordinates evaluation activities across programs
	- Maintains some standardization
	- Acts as an information channel between departments, and up and down programs and departments
	- Is responsible for an annual evaluation report
	- Provides evaluation skills and resources to program managers
	- Trains managers and staff in evaluation
External Consultant	- Identifies objectives
	- Provides credibility
	- Provides assistance with the evaluation planning and implementation by recommending appropriate evaluation methodology
	- Provides training in evaluation skills
	- Provides reinforcement
	- Assists with setting objectives, defining performance measures
	- Designs data collection tools

It is not that internal consultants cannot manage these tasks, rather it is that often they do not have sufficient time to meet all the demands of setting up a new and innovative structure.

There is usually a need for two types of evaluation:

* Evaluation Monitoring used for decision making, that is:

  - an integrated system

  - a system that serves policy planning and budgeting decisions

  - an efficient system, i.e. indicators are limited to a useful, manageable number that can be regularly collected and available on a timely basis and are able to be presented widely and in an appropriate form

* Major Evaluation Studies or Reviews that will be conducted in response to periodic needs for evaluation or in response to particular needs

Both types of evaluations may use similar data but responsibility for measuring a program often rests with the program manager who has control of a program's operations. In contrast, the purpose of program review is often to present an objective, externally credible overview of a program or resolution of politically sensitive issues.

The major focus of this paper is the introduction of an evaluation monitoring system.

5.0 WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN MANAGING EVALUATION?

There are ten steps in planning and managing evaluation:

STEP 1 PRE-EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

The tasks are:

- Understanding the context of the program - determining what is the program - its logic, structure, inputs, processes (activities, decisions, throughputs) that lead to results - outputs, outcomes and impacts

- Conducting an organizational climate survey to generate or identify readiness, awareness, constraints and support

- Determining the resources available for evaluation

- Understanding the needs of the users of the evaluation monitoring system:

  . Who are the users?

  . What do they want to evaluate?

  . Do they want to make decisions about program efficiency, effectiveness, appropriateness, standards of service provision, or all of these?

  . Do they want to address specific issues?

  . What level of the organization will the monitoring system serve?

- Designing the evaluation: assessing the appropriate evaluation method, data collection, analysis and presentation

- Producing evaluation assessment report: recommending the evaluation brief or terms of reference, work plan, composition of evaluation team, identifying likely benefits.

STEP 2 IMPLEMENTING THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGIES that will assist in building the appropriate supportive culture. These are described in a previous paper (Armstrong 1985). Briefly they are:-

(1) Endorsement of the evaluation by senior members of the organization e.g. by:

- a policy statement
- commitment and involvement

(2) Compulsory legislative enforcement

(3) Consultation - with key informants about the purpose of the evaluation, how they can be involved, how they want to be involved

(4) Communication of Information about the evaluation:

. who is responsible

. who is conducting the evaluation

. who will collect, analyze, interpret data

. why evaluate

. what/who is being evaluated

. detailed plans and actions

. is it a review or a long term process

. what do managers have to do

. what are the benefits (what's in it for me?)

Benefits accrue to the organization, individual members of the organization and clients.

The benefits to the organization vary from improved program performance relevant to "managing with less" to specific impacts on program needs.

The benefits for each individual are:

- A sense of security (managers know what is expected and the extent to which they are achieving it)
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved QWL (increased responsibility and control of their work)
- A sense of worth from being aware of their contribution to the overall goals of their organization

Benefits for "clients" are improved service delivery.

The method of communication of the information is also important.

Direct person to person contacts from a credible source is the best way of generating interest with key people. The use of mass media and peer pressures from key people will build commitment among the majority.

(5) Training:

The successful operation of an evaluation program depends upon the knowledge, skills and expertise of the managers and staff.

Some of the components of a training program may include:

- knowledge of evaluation philosophy, principles and practices
- setting objectives
- defining key result areas, indicators and performance measures
- and especially how to use evaluation information in decision making

Any program should be supported by reinforcement and follow up activities.

STEP 3

* ESTABLISH the key result areas, indicators and performance measures, standards and targets, and other criteria for judging the program

* DETERMINE the priorities for the collection of a minimum set of measures that are suitable for routine, regular and timely reporting

* SET boundaries on what the evaluation will produce

STEP 4 DESIGN A DATA BASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

(A) - Software
- Hardware

(B) Design the routine data collection, coding, analysis and presentation

STEP 5 DETERMINE RESPONSIBILITY FOR:

* The evaluation

* Data collection, manipulation

STEP 6 ESTABLISH THE REPORTING, FEEDBACK PROCEDURES:

- Who will get the results, when, how often, how will they be distributed? How will evaluation fit into the overall management cycle?

STEP 7 DETERMINE HOW PERFORMANCE WILL BE REWARDED:

- Will it be tied to promotions, monetary rewards, fringe benefits

- Will it invite some other means of recognition

STEP 8 START THE EVALUATION PROCEDURES

STEP 9 DETERMINE THE WORTH OF THE EVALUATION

- Meta-Evaluation against the "Standards for Evaluation" or pre-determined criteria

STEP 10 MAINTAIN IMPETUS BY:

- Continued endorsement from senior management
- Widespread reporting and distribution of achievements

CONCLUSION

Most professionals know something about data collection. This plan of action addresses many of the problems encountered prior to and during the implementation process.

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